

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1996

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY GABRONE

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

UNCLAS PRETORIA 4516

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PDEV, WA, SF

SUBJECT: NAMIBIA: STEYN'S INTERVIEW WITH THE SUNDAY TIMES

1. THE SUNDAY TIMES, AUGUST 6, CARRIES REPORT OF AN INTERVIEW BY FLEUR DE VILLIERS WITH ADMINISTRATOR GENERAL STEYN. THE INTERVIEW WAS HELD ON AUGUST 5 WHEN STEYN WAS IN PRETORIA FOR A LAST-MINUTE BRIEFING SESSION WITH FOREIGN MINISTER BOTHA AND OTHER SAG OFFICIALS.

2. ACCORDING TO DE VILLIERS' ARTICLE, STEYN WARNED THAT "THE BREAKING POINT" COULD STILL COME ON A NUMBER OF ISSUES. THESE WERE: POSSIBLE UN INSISTENCE ON THE RE-REGISTRATION OF VOTERS; POSTPONEMENT OF THE ELECTION DATES; AND THE SIZE OF THE UN TASK FORCE.

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2. ACCORDING TO DE VILLIERS, STEYN STEYN SAID THAT DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN AHTISAARI AND HIMSELF WOULD START ON MONDAY, AUGUST 7, AND "WE WILL SURVEY THE PROBLEMS, WE WILL DISCOVER IF THERE ARE DIFFERENCES OF OPINION AND HOW DEEP SEATED THEY ARE." THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HIMSELF AND HIS UN COUNTERPART WOULD HAVE TO BE BASED ON CLOSE PERSONAL RELATIONS, GOODWILL AND MUTUAL TRUST, STEYN SAID. "BUT I DO NOT INTEND

TO ACHIEVE AGREEMENT AT ALL COSTS."

3. REMINDED THAT THE UN CONTINGENT INCLUDED SOME "HARD-NOSED OPPONENTS" OF SOUTH AFRICA, STEYN SAID "I CAN BE PRETTY HARD-NOSED MYSELF. IT TAKES TWO TO TANGO. IF THEY ARE HARD-NOSED, SO WILL I BE."

4. DE VILLIERS REPORTED THAT STEYN WAS PREPARED IF NECESSARY TO MAKE ADJUSTMENTS TO THE REGISTRATION OF VOTERS WHICH COULD INCLUDE AN EXTENSION OF THE FINAL REGISTRATION DATE AND A POSSIBLE WIDENING OF THE QUALIFICATIONS. BUT HE WOULD NOT BOW TO THE DEMANDS FOR A COMPLETE REREGISTRATION.

5. STEYN WAS QUOTED AS SAYING "THE ELECTION DATE WILL ALSO BE ONE OF THE PROBLEMS TO BE DISCUSSED BUT I AM NOT PREPARED TO ADJUST ANYTHING AT THIS STAGE. AS FAR AS WE ARE CONCERNED IT IS INDEPENDENCE BY THE END OF THE YEAR."

6. DE VILLIERS WENT ON TO REPORT THAT SHE HAD LEARNED THAT SOUTH AFRICA HAD PUT AN UNDISCLOSED LIMIT ON THE SIZE OF THE UN FORCE, BELIVED TO BE WELL BELOW THE 5,000 FIGURE WHICH HAS BEEN FLOATED AT THE UN. SOUTH AFRICA'S STAND ON THE SIZE OF THE UN FORCE, SHE WROTE, IS BASED ON THE FACT THAT IF THERE IS A CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES AS REQUIRED UNDER THE PLAN, A LARGE UN FORCE WILL NOT BE NECESSARY. IF THERE IS NO CEASEFIRE,
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SOUTH AFRICA HAS THE RIGHT TO MAINTAIN ITS PRESENT TROOP STRENGTH. DE VILLIERS ALSO REPORTED THAT "IT IS CLEAR THAT SOUTH AFRICA WILL NOT BUDGE FROM DEC. 31 AS A DEADLINE FOR ELECTIONS --IF NOT FINAL INDEPENDENCE FOR SOUTH WEST AFRICA."
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